

Decision of the ADVERTISING REGULATORY BOARD

Advertiser	Unilever South Africa (Pty) Ltd
Consumer/Competitor	Consumer
File reference	4714 – Sunlight Platinum
Outcome	Extension granted
Date	24 August 2026

The Directorate of the Advertising Regulatory Board has been called upon to consider an application for an extension by Unilever South Africa (Pty) Ltd in complying with the ruling regarding its Sunlight Platinum Packaging.

Previous ruling

The Directorate had found the claims made by the Advertiser to be in contravention of Clause 4.2.1 of Section II of the Code of Advertising Practice, which deals with misleading claims (the “Ruling”). The Complainant had raised concerns that the front of the packaging for Sunlight Platinum states “*100% plant-based actives*”, while on the back, in small print, the packaging states that “*other non-plant-based additives are included*”. The Complainant essentially argued that if other non-plant-based actives are included, then the product cannot contain 100% plant-based actives.

The Advertiser argued that the promoted rhamnolipids are a 100% plant-based active, included in the mix of active ingredients in the product. The Directorate ultimately found that this meaning is not clear, and that the reasonable consumer would most likely conclude that

the product contains only plant-based actives, and not just one active that is 100% plant based. It upheld the complaint and ruled that the Advertiser should update the product's packaging to remove the claim that it contains "100% plant-based actives" on the front of the packaging, within three months.

Submission for extension

The Advertiser submitted, *inter alia*, that it intends to abide by the Ruling, but requested a further three-month extension to update the product packaging so that products bearing the updated packaging can be made available in market by the end of December 2026, rather than 18 September 2026 as is presently required by the Ruling.

The Advertiser explained that as the "100% plant-based active" claim appears on its entire Sunlight dishwashing liquid range, and not only on the Sunlight Platinum product. Accordingly, the change must be applied across the entire portfolio, which includes various pack sizes, namely 200ml, 400ml, 750ml and 1.5L.

The Advertiser notes that the proposed artwork changes have been finalised and were furnished to the Directorate to show the corrective steps taken to align the packaging with the ruling. However, it states, given the size of the Sunlight dishwashing liquid portfolio, the Advertiser requires additional lead time to produce and apply the updated labels across the relevant packaging formats.

The Advertiser also pointed out that if they requested extension is not granted, it is likely to incur significant revenue losses, as Sunlight dishwashing liquid is a key product in its portfolio.

Response

The Complainant did not respond to the request for an extension, though she was given the opportunity to do so.

Decision

Having considered all the material before it, the Directorate of the ARB issues the following finding.

The Advertiser has indicated its intention to abide by the Ruling and has furnished the intended updated packaging design well ahead of the deadline in the initial Ruling, which shows the steps taken by the Advertiser to implement the amendment. The Advertiser has argued that the product is a key component of its portfolio, is widely distributed in many different variations and sizes, and that not granting the extension will result in significant financial losses.

Based on the above and given that the Complainant did not offer any objection to the request for extension, and taking into consideration there is nothing before the Directorate that suggests that the Advertiser's request for an extension for adhering to the Ruling should not be granted, **the request for an extension to amend the packaging on all products where the claims appear is granted.**

For the sake of completeness, the Directorate notes that it cannot pre-clear any amendments made to the advertising and therefore will not comment on whether the proposed amendments address the concerns raised in the Ruling.

The Advertiser has until the end of December 2026 to amend its packaging.